

City of Springfield, MA

A&F Municipal Listening Session



Domenic J. Sarno
Mayor

Timothy J. Plante
Chief Administrative and Financial Officer

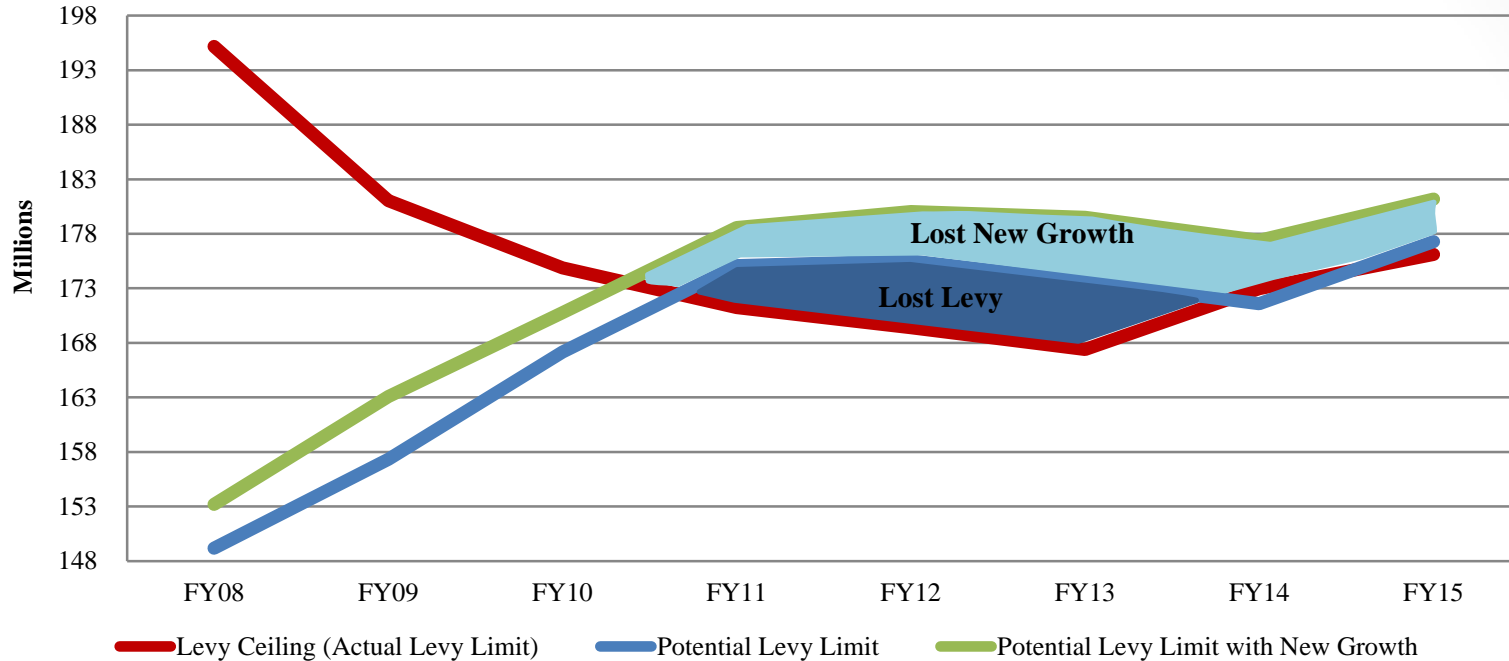
Patrick A. Roach
Chief Financial Officer, Springfield Public Schools

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New Growth

- Since 2008, the City has lost over \$1 Billion in taxable value, resulting in the inability to capture new growth in tax levy. Effects:
 - Layoffs
 - Wage and hiring freezes
 - Little capital and infrastructure investment
- *Solution:* Home rule legislation to allow Springfield to capture new growth, above the calculated levy ceiling, from 2011 on.

City of Springfield Lost Levy



	Certified New Growth	New Growth added to Levy	Lost New Growth
FY11	3,482,214	-	3,482,214
FY12	4,526,534	-	4,526,534
FY13	5,868,281	-	5,868,281
FY14	5,796,076	984,343	4,811,733
FY15	3,893,490	-	3,893,490
FY16	5,047,901	1,226,562	3,821,339
LOST NEW GROWTH FY11-FY16			26,403,591

Contractual Obligation Threshold

- Chapter 43, §29 – Purchases of \$5,000 or more require a written contract containing signatures of the Mayor (in Springfield) and the Department Head.
 - State law, special acts and local ordinance require signatures from:
 - Vendor
 - Requesting Department Head
 - Office of Procurement
 - City Solicitor
 - Comptroller
 - Mayor
 - CAFO – longer than 1 year
- *Solution:* Please support House Bill 3337: “*An Act Exempting the City of Springfield from Certain Provisions of Section 29 of Chapter 43.*”
 - Increase threshold for written contracts from **\$5,000** to match:
 - M.G.L. Ch.30B, §17 (a) **currently \$10,000**
 - M.G.L. Ch.30B, §5 (a) **currently \$35,000**

M.G.L. c.30, §39M (A) and c.149, §44A (2)

- Thresholds and procedures for advertising, solicitation of quotes, and need to conduct sealed bids are all different:

- M.G.L. c. 30B Goods and services
- M.G.L. c. 30, §39M Horizontal & Public works construction
- M.G.L. c. 149 Public (building) construction

- Effects:

- Unnecessary burden
- Delays in obtaining services
- Presents the risk for errors in understanding between requesting departments and Procurement

- *Solution:* Proposed changes to M.G.L. c. 30, §39M (A) and M.G.L. c. 149, §44A (2) (B):

- Streamline the method of procurement, advertising requirements and contractor submission requirements
- Increase threshold from to \$10,000 - \$35,000
- Provide uniformity

GIC: Utilization Data

- Limited utilization data supplied by the Group Insurance Commission (GIC). Creates the need for additional resources, supplemental information, reconciliation, and assumptions for complete analyses and quotes.
- *Solution:* The City requests the following information in addition to the supplied GIC utilization data:
 - Detailed Member Census and "Subscriber" enrollment information
 - "Paid" claims and premium/administrative paid information by month by plan
 - Hospital, Primary Care Physician, and Specialist utilization data in order to geographically track insureds
 - Prescription drug utilization

GIC: OBRA Pension

- GIC health insurance requires all employees be enrolled in a formal pension plan, OBRA does not qualify.
- Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires an offer of health insurance for employees working > 30 hours/week.
 - Some employees are OBRA and must be offered insurance
 - ACA requires a minimum of 95% offer compliance to eligible employees
 - Penalty of \$2,000 per employee (less first 30 employees) if not met
- *Solution:*
 - Allow the City to offer insurance to all employees, whether or not they were in a formal pension plan.
 - The GIC offers a minimal value plan for just employees in OBRA plans.

GIC: Wet Signature Requirement

- All enrollment and change forms require signed original to be sent to the GIC.
- Signatures for both applicant and municipality official required.
 - Burdensome to HR
 - Time consuming
 - Costly for employee processing and mailing
- *Solution:* The GIC accept electronic signatures on enrollment and change forms.
 - If, not feasible, the allowance of a copy of the form for scanning and submission.

Environmental Bond Bill

- The City is working to repair and improve Lower Van Horn Park Dam.
- Environmental Bond Bill
 - Acts of 2014 c. 286, §2A (2000-7028), state that \$1,700,000 shall be provided for improvements to the Lower Van Horn Dam in the city of Springfield.
- *Solution:* Please advise on when the funding for this bill will be released to the City of Springfield.

Education: Charter School Transportation

- Total of 56 Buses for charter schools = \$3.6M in FY15
- Lottery system - Not bound by Boundary Plan
- Charters approved by DESE, therefore calendars and schedules do not follow the Springfield Public School (SPS) calendar.
 - Tiering bus start times can save money
 - Allow for increased efficiency in scheduling
- *Solution:*
 - Inclusion of revenue as part of Ch. 70
 - Work with City on tiered start times

Education: McKinney-Vento

- Register for school in Springfield & attend for 1 day
- Special busing for students housed in surrounding areas
 - Cost has grown to \$1M
- *Solution:*
 - Residency requirement where the student must have been a permanent resident in the City for at least forty-five days, before qualifying to continue their education in their school of origin after being displaced.
 - Full reimbursement from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Education:

Chapter 70 Reform

SPS supports the Foundation Budget Review Committee's recommendations, and is mostly focused on:

English Language Learners (ELL)

- ELL services provided has doubled. Funding remains the same.
 - *Solution:* Increase the foundation's budget for ELL pupils to reflect this new mandate.
- Current formula for ELL is not equitable across the foundation pupil categories.
 - *Solution:* Funding for ELL pupils be moved from the "Base Foundation Components" section to the "Incremental Costs above the Base" in order to ensure that all pupils are funded equally.

Low-Income Pupils

- Current funding doesn't adequately address issues unique to SPS Students.
 - *Solution:* Funding for each Low-Income pupil be increased by \$500.

Education: Teacher Summer Unemployment Collection

- Teachers and other school employees collect for the summer months even though they have collected their yearly salary, and will return to work the following school year.
- *Solution:* Please support Senate Bill 961: “*An Act relative to Municipal Unemployment Insurance Reform.*”

Barbershops and Nail Salon Regulation

- Licensed at State level.
- No mechanism for collection of personal property bills
- *Solution:* City jurisdiction over licensing and inspecting cosmetology and barber shops.
 - The City would have the ability to withhold a license for failure to pay personal property taxes or other City obligations.

North Riverfront Park Lease

- Lease renewal every three years with Pioneer Valley Riverfront Club, Inc. (PVRC)
 - Long term plans for development and operation difficult
- *Solution:* Please support House Bill 3818: “*An Act Exempting the City of Springfield from Certain Provisions of the General Laws and authorizing it to Lease Certain Park Land.*”
 - Allows City and PVRC to enter into a 20 year lease

Neighborhood Homes with Educational Components

- Dover Amendment (M.G.L. c. 40, §3) trumps City zoning ordinances.
- Inspected and certified through state, overriding City regulations
 - Large rise in number of group homes
- *Solution:* Establish a limit within a location (radius)
- Increase City authority to control where group homes are established in order to stay in compliance with city zoning regulations.

Underground Storage Tank (UST) Removal

- State requires tanks no longer in use to be removed within 12 months. The City needs to remove at least 53 tanks by August 7, 2017
- The City must also investigate and mitigate releases under the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP)
 - Extremely costly and long reiterative process
- *Solution:* Financial and technical assistance to comply with these regulations.

DA Appeals of Low Bond Bail

- Under M.G.L, the right to appeal a bail decision by a District Court judge lies solely with the defendant. The District Attorney does not have the right to petition a judge's bail decision that they feel is too low, or conditions which are insufficient to protect the victim and the public, and to ensure the defendant's return to court.
- *Solution:* The City of Springfield puts forth House Bill 3830: *“An Act relative to the Commonwealth’s right to appeal bail decisions.”*

Questions and Answers